

THE LIFE OF AMERICAN WOMEN IN HAWAII-NEI

Novel Swimming Parties--A Native Feast--Mixed Marriages--Chinamen Make Good Husbands But Eventually Desert Their Families.

HONOLULU—It is all well enough to tell how the business and politics of the Hawaiian Islands have been affected by American rule, but what of the American woman's life in these little mid-sea possessions of ours? What sort of change does she find in social and domestic matters?

As far as her house is concerned the difference is not as great as one might imagine. In the old days, before the overthrow of the monarchy, many of the wooden houses were shipped over in pieces and put together by their Yankee owners. That is why there is so much New England architecture to be found here. The modern houses are nearly all built in bungalow fashion with broad verandas, so that much of the family life is in the open air. Contrary to the practice in the West Indies, carpets and rugs are used upon the floors in the dwellings, and the furnishings are similar to those used in American houses, with the possible exception of tapa mats upon the walls and polished calabash bowls for ornaments.

SOCIETY BECOMES EXCLUSIVE.

Honolulu is the social centre of the Islands, and the little town is far famed for its hospitality, although greater caution is now observed toward the stranger than formerly. Hospitality has been much abused in the past, for in the old days a pleasant address and a full purse were all that was necessary to open the way to the inner social circles of the place. After several bogus counts had been entertained and a whole raft of pretenders of one sort or another had imposed upon the people they became more cautious.

The life of the American society woman on the Islands is gay. There is a whirl of teas, dinners, receptions, balls, picnics and bathing parties. These bathing parties are a distinctive feature, and on a moonlight night nothing could be more entertaining than to watch a party in the surf. Stockings and shoes are seldom worn, because one can swim better without them, and the ride in the surf boats necessitates as little clothing as possible. Light refreshments are often partaken of in the water, and it is a novel sight for a stranger to see a Japanese servant in bathing costume passing around light drinks and refreshments to the submerged bathers.

DESCRIPTION OF NATIVE FEAST.

A luau, or native feast, is not only given by the native Hawaiians but by the Americans as well. It is a form of entertainment very much in vogue and is much sought after by strangers. The table is always covered with ferns and garlands of a sweet smelling vine which resembles smilax. Garlands of red, pink, and white carnations are combined with the green, and upon this artistic covering are placed calabashes of polished cocoa-nut shells, while brilliantly polished small bowls are at each place for the individual. The main dishes are always poi and fish. Poi is the national delicacy of the Hawaiians. It is made from the taro, a sort of potato which grows in marshy ground. The cook pounds it to a pulp in a mortar, and it is served in bowls in the form of a white, sticky paste. It tastes sour, but is a famed remedy for indigestion. It is still eaten with the fingers by the natives, but the wealthy class of Hawaiians use the fork like Europeans.

Fish baked in leaves and served in a leafy covering is one of the delicacies of this feast. Live shrimps run about the table and it sometimes makes the stranger nervous to have some one with whom he is talking pause in his remarks long enough to capture and bite the head off of a wriggling shrimp. Little raw fishes combined with seaweed are considered a great dainty. Other items of food served at one of these native feasts are dried fish, oysters, and roast pork which is cooked underground for a day and a night. There are always great bowls of soft, green cocoa-nuts and several kinds of bananas. The cocoa-nut poi which is eaten as a pudding furnishes a dessert which is very tempting to the Hawaiian palate, and one which is relished by the average American. The native style of serving a feast of this sort is to have the table spread upon the ground in picnic fashion.

STAPLE ARTICLES OF DIET.

Baked bananas are always a staple article of food, and rice is on every table. Fish is usually baked or steamed in leaves, thus retaining all its juices and natural taste. Baked poi is eaten with butter and salt, and the bread food is considered a most healthful diet. Cocoa-nut milk is very nourishing and is regarded as a favorite drink throughout the Islands. Former Governor Dole used to take a

glass of cocoa-nut water on his way to his bungalow nearly every evening while he was in office, and the little place he named Cocoa-nut Inn still flourishes.

The streets of Honolulu are always picturesque in the matter of dress. There is every variety of costume from the Mother Hubbard to the modern dress of the smart American woman. You can see the natives nearly every morning riding on horseback one behind another with garlands around their heads. There are young kanaka girls exposing brown feet, bright teeth, and bare legs; dainty little Japanese women clanking along on their wooden sandals, and soft slippers Chinese girls wearing the bright silks that are the pride of the Orient.

The most unusual thing to which the American woman in Hawaii must accustom herself is the mixture of blood she encounters on every hand. The natives have intermarried with almost every nationality. Englishmen, Americans and Germans have taken native girls for wives. The natives also intermarry with the Chinese to a great extent. The reason they give is that the Chinamen make a good provider. However, the Celestial has an unpleasant way of going home as soon as he becomes wealthy, and he invariably leaves his Hawaiian family behind. A notable example of this was in the Afong family. Mr. Afong was a full-blooded Chinaman who married a Hawaiian girl. A number of sons and daughters blessed the union, and in the course of time the father became so wealthy that he was said to be many times a millionaire. Then Mr. Afong yearned for China. After settling large sums of money upon his wife and each of his children he took his departure for the land of his nativity. For years the beautiful home of Mrs. Afong was besieged by marriageable young men of all classes and her daughters one after the other became the wives of white men.

HAWAIIAN A PROUD RACE.

The pride of birth which exists among the Hawaiians is often a matter of astonishment to Americans. An example of this was given recently when the governor of Hawaii invited a prominent native to dinner. An American who was very close to the Hawaiian family was approached and asked if he thought the invitation could be accepted without the loss of dignity, as the native did not consider the governor's family on an equality with his own. This is only one of many instances showing the excessive pride of birth which characterizes the Hawaiian race. They have dark skins but was betide any one who presumes to classify them as negroes. It would be a dangerous thing for any one in Hawaii to attempt to draw what is known as the "color-line" in the United States. There is no such thing here. Not long ago, while Prince Cupid, the Hawaiian delegate to Washington, was taking a pleasure trip in Canada, a man on

the street sneeringly referred to him as a "nigger" and was promptly knocked down. That is the way they feel about it.

The natives hold undisputed sway in Honolulu society. Doubtless the most conspicuous figure is the Princess Kawananakoa, wife of Prince David, who is a nephew of ex-Queen Liliuokalani. The Princess is a charming woman of unusual beauty. Her father was a Scotchman and her mother a native. She is twenty-one years old and has two children. Aside from being one of the most accomplished ladies on the island, she has a fortune of several millions in her own right. She is in great favor with all classes and a leader in the most exclusive society of Honolulu.

COURT OF EX-QUEEN LILI.

Queen Liliuokalani, notwithstanding her dethronement, is one of the most important figures in Hawaii today. In the United States there seems to be a tendency to laugh at the deposed queen's pretensions, but come out here and laugh if you dare. Her home is a big square house built after the plantation residences of the South, and it is beautifully furnished. She receives in state with the two princesses always at her side. Two chamberlains in black broadcloth with tall silk hats and fluttering white rosettes attached to their coats, are stationed at each door. Your name is taken by one and another conducts you into the presence of the queen. If she knows you intimately she will bow and say a few pleasant words, but if you are a stranger she will nod to you graciously and the ceremony is ended by your backing out of the room the best way you can.

One of the peculiarities of the Hawaiian women is a sense of seriousness. There is always an element of sadness in their demeanor. You cannot be flippant with them because they would not understand and would certainly resent it. I traveled on the same steamer from San Francisco to Honolulu with Prince Cupid and his wife, and the reserved attitude of Mrs. Cupid was a matter of general comment. She hardly smiled more than twice during the whole six days.

PASTIMES OF THE ISLAND.

There are many ways of passing the time in Hawaii. The climate is considered enervating but the American woman overcomes it by exercise. Tennis is very popular and a large golf club is well patronized. Baseball is a regular Saturday afternoon attraction and all classes join in the fun of watching the great American game. Surf-boating is a sport peculiar to Honolulu and strangers are always enthusiastic over it. There are many automobiles owned here and this form of sport is much in vogue.

It is said that social conditions are rapidly changing in the capital of our island possession. Formerly the American girl of good character, be she school teacher, clerk, or stenographer, was given entrée to the best circles, but the number of resident Americans has now become so great that the lines are being drawn more closely and factions are being established.

UNPUBLISHED POEM BY STEVENSON.

But the islanders are really great entertainers. They have had many famous people as their guests. Robert Louis Stevenson spent some time here. He was the guest of Mr. Archibald Cleghorn, a Scotchman who married into the royal family of Hawaii in the days of the monarchy. His little daughter, the Princess Kaiulani, would have been the natural successor of Queen Lili, the present incumbent. Stevenson became greatly attached to the little princess and visited her constantly. When it was determined that she should make a visit to Scotland he wrote the following verse and explanation in her album:

"Forth from her land to mine she goes,

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The Island maid, the Island rose,
Light of heart and bright of face,
The daughter of a double race.

Her Islands here in southern sun,
Shall mourn their Kaiulani gone,
And I, in her dear banyan shade,

Look vainly for my little maid,
But our Scott's Islands far away,
Shall glitter with unwonted day,
And cast for once their tempests by
To smile in Kaiulani's eye.

"Written in April to Kaiulani in the April of her age and in Waikiki with-in easy reach of Kaiulani's banyan. When she comes to my land and her father's and the rain beats upon the window (as I fear it will) let her look at this page. It will be like a weed gathered and preserved at home and she will remember her islands and the shadow of the mighty tree; and she will hear the peacock screaming in the dark and the wind blowing in the palms and she will think of her father sitting there alone."

R. L. S.
The little princess died shortly after her famous friend went away, and Mr. Cleghorn has never allowed any one to use the verse before. He gives me his assurance that this is the first time it has ever been in print.

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